

SPRING 2020 • VOLUME 28, NO. 1

## SPRING HIGHLIGHTS

Harrison Fountain,  
historical marker,  
Founders' Day,  
and more

## WOMEN OF INFLUENCE

First lady  
addresses gender  
diversity and  
campus needs

## BACK IN THE GAME

COVID-19  
takes toll  
on spring  
sports

# WORKING HANDS

Alumni, faculty, and staff  
had rigorous disinfectant  
protocols before the  
novel coronavirus.  
It just wasn't like this.



## COVER STORY

8 Working Hands

## LETTERS

- 2 From the President
- 3 From the Vice President
- 4 From the Editor
- 44 From the Alumni President

## UPDATES

- 6 Honors College
- 20 College of Arts and Sciences
- 24 College of Business
- 28 Anderson College of Nursing and Health Professions
- 32 College of Education and Human Sciences
- 36 Athletics
- 40 Alumni

## OF NOTE

- 5 Harrison Fountain
- 16 Women of Influence
- 18 Founders' Day
- 19 Norton Auditorium
- 45 Historical Marker Unveiling
- 46 Class Notes
- 48 In Memory

SPRING 2020 • VOLUME 28  
NO. 1



A photograph capturing a festive scene of students celebrating the Holi Festival. In the foreground, several students from behind are seen raising their hands high, holding small packets of colorful powder (gulaal). They are throwing the powder into the air, creating a dense, vibrant cloud of orange, yellow, red, and blue dust that fills the upper half of the frame. The students are dressed in casual clothing, with some wearing t-shirts featuring "UNIVERSITY'S Holi FESTIVAL" and "Holi 2020". The background shows bare trees under a clear sky, suggesting an outdoor event during spring.

On March 10, 2020, students gathered for the Holi Festival, which is a popular ancient Hindu event that originates from the Indian subcontinent.

Students learned about the festival and enjoyed throwing colored powder at one another as part of the celebration.



**It's important  
that we  
not allow  
[coronavirus]  
to define  
us as an  
institution or  
overshadow  
the many  
achievements  
that occurred  
during this  
academic  
year.**

*Dear Friends:*

It is my pleasure to welcome you to this Spring 2020 edition of *UNA Magazine*. As I write this letter from my office, our beautiful and historic campus is bedecked in spring splendor – but it's also strangely silent for this time of the year. It's disappointing that this semester has been so disrupted by the coronavirus outbreak. We miss our students, and we miss the many events and activities that normally accompany the end of the academic year.

As with all universities, the pandemic has had a significant impact on our operations. We moved all spring and summer classes online and helped our students return home much earlier than normal. Those were the right decisions to make, and we will continue to prioritize health and safety as we plan for the reopening of our campus and the eventual return of face-to-face classes at UNA.

As big as the coronavirus story has been, it's important that we not allow that topic to define us as an institution or overshadow the many achievements that occurred during this academic year. In 2019-2020, we celebrated new enrollment records, secured approval for the launch of new degree programs, and established ourselves as Alabama's leader in the field of workforce development.

In Montgomery, Project 208 came into full bloom and helped garner unprecedented attention for UNA and for the larger cause of ensuring fairness in funding decisions for higher education. Our students excelled academically, winning national honors and catapulting UNA onto the list of the top producers of Fulbright Awards. They also excelled in athletics, achieving milestone wins over top programs and advancing us to the midway mark of our transition to Division I.

If it sounds as if I'm excited about the future of our University, I am! One great thing about being the president of an institution with 190 years of history is that I never doubt our resilience. Our faculty and staff have responded to the challenges of the last two months with great professionalism. We have served our students well and will continue to do so with pride and a caring touch. It's the UNA way.

In closing, please know that Dena and I join you in looking ahead to better days for our community, state, and country. We value you as friends and send best wishes to you and your families. Thank you for your continuing support of the University of North Alabama.

**Kenneth D. Kits, Ph. D.**  
*President*



## Dear UNA Family and Friends:

Greetings from the beautiful University of North Alabama campus and the UNA Foundation.

People and relationships...to me, this is what matters most. I truly believe that every person has great value, that their life has great meaning, and that they have a great purpose to fulfill in their life. I also believe that pure-hearted, authentic relationships are the key to joy, fulfillment, and success. I was blessed to find a team of like-minded people when I had the honor and privilege of joining the UNA Family. Together, we have accomplished many great things.

Most importantly, in genuinely valuing and appreciating every person, we have created a culture of philanthropy that values and honors every person, their passions, and their gifts – be they gifts of time, talent, or treasure. We truly believe in and honor the mantra we created: Your passion. Your philanthropy. Every giver. Every gift. Matters.

As we embarked on this journey, it was critically important to the Advancement Family that we educate others about philanthropy, that we create mechanisms for people to give to and in the manner that is most meaningful to them, and that we give everyone the opportunity to do so. Simply put: We wanted to empower you to do what is deeply meaningful to you, for you to make a difference through your philanthropy. Your response has been truly awe-inspiring!

- On November 18, we had the First Leo and Una Giving Day. On this day that we honored our majestic mascots, 141 donors gave \$27,965.50.
- On January 13, we had the First Founders' Day Giving Day. On this day that we

honored the founding of our great University, 69 donors gave \$32,903.50.

- On March 10, we had our UNA Giving Day. On this day that we empowered you to give to UNA in whatever manner is most meaningful to you, 142 donors gave \$98,413.12.
- In response to the untimely passing of one of our beloved family members, Jeff Eubanks, the UNA Family rose up in an indescribable manner to establish through their gifts the Jeff Eubanks Culinary Arts Program.
- Finally, there are not words, or space in this magazine, to describe adequately the profound impact so many have made through the gifts of their time and/or talent. Rick Warren stated it perfectly when he said, "When you give someone your time, you are giving them a portion of your life that you'll never get back. Your time is your life. That is why the greatest gift you can give someone is your time." While it feels so inadequate, from the depths of my heart I say thank you to everyone who has volunteered or served.

As we all continue to deal with the effects of COVID-19, please know that you and your families are in my thoughts and prayers. We will overcome this for the same reason that this great University has overcome adversities for 190 years...because of the quality and character of the people! Please be safe, and I hope to see you all very soon.

Roar Lions!

**Kevin R. Haslam**

*Vice President for University Advancement  
Executive Director, UNA Foundation*

#### ADMINISTRATION

President  
Kenneth D. Kitts

Provost and Executive Vice President  
for Academic Affairs  
Ross Alexander

Vice President for  
Business and Financial Affairs  
Evan Thornton '15

Vice President for Student Affairs  
Kim Greenway '91

Vice President for University Advancement  
Kevin Haslam

Vice President for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion  
Ron Patterson

#### STAFF

PUBLISHER/EDITOR  
Michelle Eubanks '96

COPY EDITOR  
B.J. Wilson '80

CREATIVE DIRECTOR  
Kali Daniel '16

UNIVERSITY VIDEOGRAPHER/PHOTOGRAPHER  
Leah Johnson

CONTRIBUTING PHOTOGRAPHERS  
Taranae Cooley  
Cody Moore  
Shannon Wells '05

#### FEATURE WRITERS

Dean Vince Brewton Kali Daniel '16 Michelle Eubanks '96	Jeremy Henderson Guy McClure '84 Dr. Cynthia Stenger
---	--

QUESTIONS OR INQUIRIES:  
256-765-4225

ADDRESS CHANGES AND ALUMNI UPDATES:  
256-765-4201 or [alumni1@una.edu](mailto:alumni1@una.edu)

**STATEMENT OF NONDISCRIMINATION**  
 UNA adheres to all federal and state civil rights laws prohibiting discrimination in public institutions of higher education. UNA will not discriminate against any employee, applicant for employment, student or applicant for admission on the basis of race, color, sex, pregnancy, religion, creed, ethnicity, national origin, disability, age, sexual orientation, gender identity, veteran or military status, predisposing genetic characteristics, domestic violence victim status or any other protected category under applicable local, state or federal law, including protections for those opposing discrimination or participating in any resolution process on campus or within the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission or other human rights agencies. This policy covers nondiscrimination in employment and in access to educational opportunities. Reports of discrimination may be reported to the following areas: Human Resources, Student Conduct, University Ombudsman, Title IX Administrator.

Information contained herein is as it currently exists but is subject to change without prior notice.



## Editor's Note

Honors College.

In ways big and small, the global pandemic has caused us to reprioritize and reconsider – reconsider the ways we work and interact with one another and reprioritize what we know to be essential. Without a doubt, the Anderson College of Nursing and Health Professions graduates essentials, the heroes who show up on the front lines every day. And Jeremy Henderson's story highlights the worth these invaluable individuals bring to our lives. Beyond our healthcare heroes, there are ample nods to the pandemic and how our faculty, staff, students, alumni, and friends responded to it.

This issue is also a bit personal to me. As many of you know, my husband and UNA alum, Jeff Eubanks ('96), passed away suddenly in February. The outpouring from our UNA family buoyed me and allowed me and my daughters to begin to heal. I encourage you to take the time to read the piece on the naming of the Culinary Arts Program in his honor. Jeff would be so humbled by this extraordinary legacy to his career as a chef.

This fall, our oldest daughter, Maeve, will move on to campus and begin her UNA career. I can't wait to see how she makes it her home, as we did. After all, UNA is the place where Jeff and I met, so I'm rather partial. And that's some good news, which is something we could all use a bit more of these days.

Roar Lions!

**Michelle Rupe Eubanks ('96)**



**A**t the close of the Fall 2019 semester, a portion of the large bowl of the Harrison Fountain collapsed. During the course of the next several weeks and throughout the holiday, the fountain was dismantled and the parts were preserved so that the fountain could be restored to its original design. Since then, University officials have worked with engineers and marble suppliers as part of the restoration process. The work is ongoing and should be complete by late summer or early fall.

The fountain is named for alumna Laura M. Harrison and was a gift to campus in 2002 as the anchor for Harrison Entrance. The Harrison Fountain has been a campus landmark since and is the site of the annual Lucky Dip as well as photo shoots with graduates and student organizations. Each year, the campus celebrates its relighting in the spring with the Light the Fountain event; that event will take place in the fall of 2020.



# Reaching new HEIGHTS

*Honors College success soars with support from Delores and Weldon Cole*

by Dr. Vince Brewton  
For the UNA Magazine

Since its founding in 2005, the Honors Program on the University of North Alabama campus has attracted some of the best and brightest students in order to establish UNA as a first-choice institution in the Southeast. In 2018, the Board of Trustees approved a transition of the existing Honors Program to a new Honors College, making an Honors education an institutional priority at UNA.

In March, the Board acted once more to enhance the profile of the Honors College by accepting a naming opportunity from Delores and Weldon Cole. The Coles have long been supporters of the Honors College and its mission. Mr. Cole also serves on its advisory board.

"We are often asked why we are so passionate about the Honors College when we both attended the business school," said Mr. Cole. "We are enormously proud and grateful for the business

school, which prepared us to compete with anyone, anywhere. We have observed, however, that the Honors College attracts the best and brightest students, and many of whom will enroll in the business school. Moreover, the Honors College has the potential to enhance the University's brand like no other initiative. Therefore, we know of no better way to support our beloved University."

Increased visibility of the new Honors College has accelerated an already strong enrollment trend,

and participation in the College is expected to reach 500 students in the Fall of 2020. Honors students participate in all majors and programs across the University, while also completing the requirements of one of several specially designed Honors pathways. The focus of the Honors College is success at the highest levels, and 95 percent of graduates are working in their fields or attending graduate school within a year of graduation.

Here are some of their stories:



**Chris Gorbatoff**, '19, came to UNA from Summertown, Tenn., with a desire to work in finance, a path that led to his position as a staff accountant with Edwards Oil Co., in Lawrenceburg, Tenn. He said he came to UNA because "the faculty and staff really impressed me, being so kind and willing to show me how to adapt to college life and coursework. However, the Honors College was what sealed the deal. If I hadn't made my first friend at college during the Honors College orientation, I might have gone to another school."



An Accounting and Spanish Language graduate from Decatur, **Miracle Osborne**, '16, was recently promoted to Human Resources Manager at Fortune 200 firm ITW Sexton. Miracle's time at UNA was characterized by numerous on-campus commitments in and beyond the Honors College. She is at work on an Executive MBA and is considering engineering as a future career path. "I am convinced my time at UNA could not have been fully replicated at another institution," she said.



**James Trentham**, '21, is a native of Sulligent and would like to pursue a career as a ranger in state or national parks. His choice of Geography major with an Outdoor Recreation minor is not surprising given his personality and passions. A friendly campus environment was an important draw for him. "UNA has an atmosphere like no other. As a growing university, it still feels like a home, where everyone knows everyone," James said. The Honors College has created opportunities for him to meet a diverse range of people while giving tours to prospective students.



**Haley Yarber**, '20, has distinguished herself in the classroom and across campus, just as she did as a multi-year starter for the UNA Soccer Team. The Cleveland, Tenn., native finished with a degree in Kinesiology and plans to work for a year coaching and training before enrolling in a Physical Therapy program. An active researcher in the field of exercise science, Haley was co-president of UNA's Human Performance Research Group. "The Honors College was the support system that I needed to stay extra-focused and motivated throughout my four years at UNA," she said.

# WORKING

# HANDS

Story by Jeremy Henderson  
Photos by Leah Johnson  
and Cody Moore

It's May 12, 2020,  
and as long as you don't  
glance at her hands, 23-year-old

Lexie Green looks exactly how she  
did on May 12, 2018, the day she got  
her degree from the University of North

Alabama Anderson College of Nursing and

Health Professions and Honors College. Her hair  
and glasses are the same; her great smile is still great.

But her hands are just awful. They're dry; they're cracked.  
She does her best to keep them moisturized, but since March  
9, it's just been next to impossible. The Double Springs native  
has been with Ochsner Medical Center's ICU pretty much since she  
moved to New Orleans right after graduation, and they obviously had  
rigorous disinfection protocols before the novel coronavirus arrived.

**It just wasn't like this.**

She'll scrub for 30 seconds before she puts on the gloves. Then she'll go in. She'll check their vital signs, she'll check their IVs. Sometimes she'll hold their hand until the beeps stop so that she can tell the family that the mom or dad or daughter or son who'd walked in just days earlier with mild symptoms didn't die alone. She'll peel off the gloves and suds up with sanitizer, then walk out and hit the sink again. One hundred times a day she'll do that. Maybe more. It's been brutal. It's all been brutal. The deaths. The grief. The uncertainty. The risk. But that's the job these days. And Lexie Green was born for it.

"Ever since I was little I always liked taking care of people. I had doctor kits and would take care of my stuffed animals," she said. "I feel like God's gifted me with compassion, and that's one of the core values of nursing. I just felt God leading me to become a nurse."

Specifically, she felt God leading her to become a nurse at the University of North Alabama, a feeling that the COVID-19 crisis has done nothing but affirm.

## "I feel like God's gifted me with compassion, and that's one of the core values of nursing.

"I had several offers from other schools, but I knew UNA had a great nursing program and when I met the nursing faculty, I just knew it was the right fit," Lexie said. "They prepare you, not just with all the important clinical skills, but with how to be a kind, caring, sympathetic nurse. They teach you how to really love and care for people. They teach you how important that first impression is."

And so for the past two or three months, or however long it's been, Lexie will arrive for her 7 a.m. shift, wash up and gear up and tape her mask to her nose to keep her glasses from fogging up, and do her best to be the kindest, most caring, most sympathetic nurse her patients have ever seen — even if they can't see her, even if they can't hear her — just like she was taught.

"In the first semester of nursing

school, I used to be so nervous about it," she said. "But [COVID patients] are at the most vulnerable point in their life. They are sick and scared and you as a nurse have an incredible impact on their experience in the hospital. Sometimes, you're the first person they see in the morning, so every day when I go into my patients' rooms, even if they're sedated, even if they're on a ventilator and may not be able to hear me, I tell them 'Hi, my name is Lexie. I'm your nurse today, and I'm really going to take care of you.'"



In between scaling the new mountains of work that began forming on her desk in March — "It seems like I'm busier than ever" — ACONHP Dean Vicki Pierce, and plenty of her faculty, have kept up with Lexie and all the rest as best they can. On Facebook, in texts. Proud doesn't begin to describe it.

Pick any front line anywhere in the country — ERs, ICUs, designated COVID units — and you'll find an Anderson graduate. Lexie Green in New Orleans. Lauren Walker in Huntsville. Seth Richardson at NAMC. Marissa Deal out in Denver. Casey Snell up in New York. Chrisy Gambrell in Tennessee. They're everywhere. The list goes on forever. And Pierce is committed to keep adding to it, whatever it takes.

She had a feeling a new normal might be on the horizon around the first of March. By March 16, she could see it clearly.

"My executive assistant's daughter lives in San Francisco," she says. "San Francisco was the first city to go into the shelter-in-place mode, and a few days earlier I got a notice from the Alabama Board of Nursing granting some leniency for students unable to meet clinical obligations."

Life was about to get complicated. Pierce chose to look on the bright side. Spring Break was a week away. That was big in terms of giving the College time to prepare for the remote instruction directive she knew was coming.

Even bigger? They were pretty much prepared already.

"We've offered online nursing education since 2001," Pierce says. "We were actually the very first online program at UNA. We were certainly one





of the first in the state, maybe even the country. Our faculty have been amazing these past months, and only a few had not done online instruction before all this."



Technology is amazing. Zoom is wonderful. But Lakeva Harris missed her Nursing 410 class. It was even just the simple things – making a joke and actually hearing their laughs, not just seeing them smile on mute. For her, that was always one of the great things about UNA – the relationships, the sense of togetherness that comes with such a low professor-to-student ratio. That's why she chose Anderson herself 10 years ago. So that part was hard.

But logically speaking?

"It really wasn't bad," she said.

"We were already using [online course management system] Canvas, and we would have Zoom sessions, and we'd already been using discussion boards. The students already knew how to do all of it, so the transition was actually pretty painless."

Going forward, however, is where it might get tricky. For everyone.

Harris and her husband were supposed to have opened the doors on a new business on March 30, a pediatric urgent care clinic on Florence Blvd., in Florence, the area's first. Things happened. Plans changed. There might be a lot of that going around for a little while.

"I think for my Level 4 senior students who were about to graduate, there was just a feeling of uncertainty," she says. "What do we tell them now that the world could be different tomorrow? First it was graduation – are they going to graduate on time, are their certification exams going to be delayed? I know they're wanting to get more nurses out into the field as soon as possible, and our students want to get out there, but there's still just that uncertainty of not knowing what's next."

Laura Williams agrees.

"There could be a winter wave that could be more severe," she said. "We won't know until we get there, and we're going to have to prepare."

Williams has been a nurse for 26 years, a UNA professor for 13. She doesn't take

chances. She's not going to start now. She shows up for work at the Shoals Community Clinic on Wednesdays – they've seen several cases – and gears up and wipes down and does everything she can to keep Lauderdale County low on the list of Alabama's COVID count. But she doesn't just see it as patient care. It's continuing education. It's class prep.

## "What do we tell them now that the world could be different tomorrow?

"When the next wave comes, it's going to be the middle of flu season, so you have to be prepared for another differential diagnosis," she said. "When someone comes into your office with fever and chills, you think upper respiratory, you think bronchitis. But you're going to have to be so well-versed in COVID symptoms, in the different clinical presentations."

But how do you learn the different clinical presentations when facilitating course requirements for nursing students is the last thing on a healthcare administrator's mind?

"Well," said Williams, whose classes were already completely online, "that's where you have to get creative with your assignments."



Mrs. Lucy Rodriguez had a broken hip, but she had to share a room with a coughing 70-year-old Samantha Smith who had a cardiac catheterization scheduled, because even though her EKG had been fine, no one liked her lab results. Ditto the tests for 87-year-old Ida Mae Denson, who was suddenly showing signs of atrial fibrillation. But they soon all had to take a back seat to John James, who, if he survived the tension pneumothorax and the tracheotomy, definitely wouldn't ride another motorcycle for a while.

All of which is to say that April 24 was a busy day for the students Zooming into Dr. Will Brewer's Leadership and Adult Health classes.

It was a busy day for Brewer, too.



"Yeah, I actually played John James," said Brewer, an associate professor at ACONHP. "I went up to the simulation lab and, you know, made it look like I actually had a tracheostomy in place."

If the image of 36-year old Brewer wrapping a trach tube around his neck in order to get his students the crucial clinical training they needed to graduate on time — the training that COVID-19 threatened to rob them of — doesn't show the incredible lengths to which ACONHP faculty have gone in the age of remote instruction, nothing will.

"The hospitals won't allow clinical students right now, but the Board of Nursing set forth some guidelines that stated that if students had met 50 percent of their required clinical hours and the objectives had been met, you are to consider that clinical completed," Brewer said. "They said that there are other things that could suffice if the hours hadn't been met, and that included simulation."

The medical mirage Brewer and Co. were able to achieve with a wide array of cutting-edge healthcare training technology received rave reviews. Students filled out assessment forms and implemented orders with information gleaned through Zoom not only from "patient" performances, but apps that simulate cardiac function and other vital signs.

"Thankfully," said Brewer, who is developing his own app that streamlines nurse assessment protocols, "our senior students were able to meet their objectives, to get that experience."

Including COVID-19 experience?

"Well, we did have them test Samantha Smith for COVID, because she had some of the symptoms like the dry cough, and it turns out she'd had community exposure," Brewer said. "But her test came back negative. She didn't have it."



Chrisy Gambrell's patients had it, which is why she's inside her garage right now, safely away from her family, just in case. It's not fun. She can't hug anyone. She only sees her husband when they take walks around their property, six feet apart or more, she sipping from the paper cup of coffee he leaves for her. But at least she's home.

Gambrell is a travel nurse. She earned a psychology degree from UNA in 2004. She went back for a nursing degree that she finished in 2012. She's working toward her master's from ACONHP, concentrating in Family Nursing Practice. She loves being a travel nurse. She loves meeting and taking care of new people. She's used to living in hotels for long stretches ... not that you would describe her recent 44-day stint at the

Days Inn in Dyersburg, Tenn., as living.

She told management that she was working with COVID-19 patients over at West Tennessee Healthcare and arranged to have a contact-free check-in. She wore masks, and gloves, and kept the "Do Not Disturb" hanger on the door the whole time. No going to the ice machine. No going down to breakfast. No daily room cleanings. It was a pain, and she didn't have any symptoms. But the thought of infecting someone? That she could be an asymptomatic "silent spreader?" That, she couldn't bear.

"They get sick quickly, and things evolve fast," Gambrell said. "I've never seen anything like it. I can turn my back on a patient that's laughing and talking with me, and turn back around and they're blue and not breathing."

She spent her downtime on her bed reading the Society of Critical Care Medicine daily reports, trying to stay up to date on the latest hard-skill tactics in the fight against the virus. That's been the easy part.

"But maintaining my ability to provide the soft skills of nursing during this pandemic is easier said than done," she said.

Thankfully, Anderson taught her both.

"They molded each of us to serve others regardless of the cost," she said of her professors. "I remember in Dr.



Williams' class one day, she asked us what 'sacrifice in relation to nursing' meant to us."

Gambrell says that for years, it mostly just meant working harder, staying late, taking the hardest patients. Things like that.

Since March, it's meant life and death. And it probably will for a while.

She'll get out of the garage soon enough. But in June, it's back on the road — she just got another COVID assignment in Memphis.

"Now, going to work during COVID has me asking God: 'Is today going to be the day I don't come home?' That's sacrifice in relation to nursing," she said. "That's me knowing that today may be the day I sacrifice my life for one of my patients."



Thousands of people have seen the video now, which Lexie still finds hard to believe, mostly because she recorded it as much for her as anyone else. But it's resonating with folks in ways she never expected. Twelve thousand views and counting. It's been nearly six weeks, and she's still getting thank-you notes from strangers.

She thought she might eventually put some of it on Facebook, but it was mostly her way of doing a diary. Come 7 p.m., she'd be exhausted, and it was just easier

to talk to the camera about what she'd just seen than call up and cry to folks back home. She'd hop back in her RAV4, peel off the mask and prop the phone on the dashboard for 10 or 15 minutes and just talk. She could try to decompress and maybe come close to processing what in the world was happening.

One of the early clips was actually shot before work, though, not after. She's walking into the hospital. She's dragging. She's tired. But nights had been rough, she said. She'd been having nightmares, mostly about people dying. It was probably just lack of sleep, she said.

Midway during her following shift, she grabbed her personal thermometer, just in case. She couldn't remember the last time she'd had a fever.

101.

She double checked with one the ICU thermometers. 101.

They sent her to get tested. Then they sent her home. She cried.

She got the call two days later, but, in her mind, it was just a formality. She knew the symptoms. She'd been exposed to the symptoms every day for three weeks. Chills, aches, shortness of breath. She knew she was positive.

She hung up, turned the phone around, hit record and said, "I have never been more confident in my calling as a nurse."

She rode out the two weeks home alone praying and binge watching "The Office," the whole time wishing she was at the office, back with her patients. She wanted to put the gloves back on and go fight. It was only early April. The city was still under siege. She felt guilty.

All the PPE — all the scrubbing and sanitizing — and it still got her.

But if there was a silver lining, that was it — not having to breathe through a mask all day, not having to rub her hands quite as raw. She still washed them plenty, but with no one around to infect, she could ease off a little, and wait to empty the cans of Lysol until it was all over.

On April 14, after more air hugs from her co-workers than she could count, she was back at it — 12 hours in the trenches, scrubbing, serving, not quite back up to speed, but more determined than ever to answer her call and put her training to use. A few hours before she left, the news broke: COVID deaths in Louisiana had passed 1,000 thanks to 129 more victims tallied overnight, nearly twice the state's previous daily record, almost all in New Orleans. Lexie walked out, found her car, and reached for the lotion.

It takes her a second to remember the brand.

"Um," she said, "I think it's called Working Hands."



**By Michelle Rupe Eubanks '96**  
**For the UNA Magazine**

Dena Kitts has served in her role as First Lady at the University of North Alabama for five years, and in that time, she's gotten to know the students and their stories – what brought them to UNA, how they're paying for their education, what their degree will mean to them upon graduation.

"Many of these stories include tremendous personal challenges," she said. "It's their stories of fortitude, courage, and determination that inspire me. This is my mission in motion."

That mission is one that has inspired Dena to create Women of Influence, along with UNA alumna Stephanie Teichmiller and Assistant Vice President of Advancement Barbie Terry. The group offers a new model of giving at UNA in which the members determine and disperse funding to educational programs and "student-centered initiatives in critical need of assistance," Dena said.

"Women of Influence at UNA is an opportunity for us to centralize our talents in a collaborative way to highlight the educational piece of

To become a part of Women of Influence, you may make a gift online at [una.edu/dayofgiving/women](http://una.edu/dayofgiving/women); You may also mail gifts to UNA Box 5113, Florence, AL 35632. For more information about the initiative, contact Barbie Terry at 256.765.5082 or [bterry5@una.edu](mailto:bterry5@una.edu).

# Mission in Motion

Women of Influence designed with student need in mind

charitable giving and determine educational areas of need in a very direct, student-centered manner."

Originally, Dena had hoped to launch the initiative during the summer. The global pandemic put those plans on hold; however, it hasn't stopped the opportunity to reach stakeholders and alumni across the country who could be a part of this initial group of Women of Influence members. Further, there's a significant historical event coming in 2021.

"My husband, President Ken Kitts, never misses an opportunity to remind alumni and friends that it is an exciting time to be a Lion," Dena said. "The trajectory of UNA and its footprint on our community, this state, and our nation has never been more important or more prominent. Also, we are approaching an important milestone in the historical fabric of our University; in 1872, women were admitted for the first time to UNA. The creation of Women of Influence at UNA honors and celebrates the University's first steps toward gender diversity."

Membership in Women of

Influence is open to women, alumni, and friends of the University of North Alabama who support this fund. Membership levels range from \$250 annually through the Founder's Club, which includes members who commit \$5,000 or more during a five-year period.

"What's important to remember is that there are no insignificant gifts," Barbie said. "If this is your passion, now is the time to join other women philanthropists who share a passion for and a commitment to UNA."

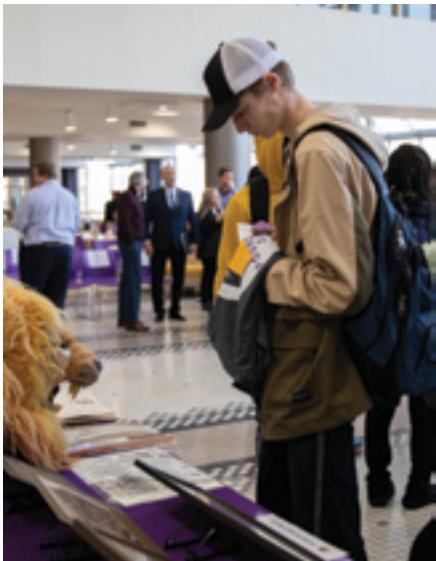
As part of their participation, the members of Women of Influence will be invited to two campus-based meetings in order to see an exclusive look into the heart of UNA. Members will take tours of new buildings and hear from faculty, alumni, or students about how the University has made a difference in their lives.

As the First Lady's signature initiative, one-third of the donations raised annually will be designated to the Caring for the Pride fund, which personally speaks to Dena's philanthropic heart. This fund

supports the immediate needs of the UNA family including students, faculty, and staff who have been adversely affected by a short-term, unexpected life event. The membership will vote annually on the remaining two-thirds of the funds disbursement so that every member has a voice in how the money will – and can – make a difference in the lives of students.

In addition to making a lasting and long-term difference in the lives of students, there are a number of other ways Women of Influence will be an important part of campus giving for years to come.

"We have a real opportunity with Women of Influence to impact student success directly," Dena said. "My hope is that the Women of Influence becomes a hallmark philanthropic feature of UNA. Other universities with similar initiatives have had tremendous success in raising money and have thereby increased the financial footprint on their campuses as well as in their respective communities. Our collective vision will determine our impact and our goals for initial and long-term success."



On Jan. 11, the University of North Alabama observed its 190th birthday and commemorated its history as the oldest four-year university in the state. A campus-wide celebration took place Monday, Jan. 13, as part of a new tradition ushered in with free t-shirts and cupcakes.

Founded in Leighton in neighboring Colbert County, LaGrange College welcomed 70 students and faculty to campus when it opened on Jan. 11, 1830. Since then, there have been eight name changes, and, in 1974, as part of the last and final name change, the school became the University of North Alabama.

As an homage to the founding in Leighton, LaGrange College site caretakers L.C. and Louise Lenz were present for the event. The birthday event will be a part of annual celebrations on the UNA campus as UNA approaches its 200th birthday in 2030.



*Renovations as of April 2020.*



*Before renovations.*

In late 2019, the first phase of renovations in Norton Auditorium got underway as part of a \$1.8 million project that allowed the space to become more functional as well as more representative of its home on the University of North Alabama campus.

Built in 1969, this is the first large-scale modernization project that has taken place at the facility used for stage productions for campus-based entities as well as those from the community. As part of the work, all of the seating and carpeting in the facility has been replaced. Norton's walls and ceiling have been repaired and painted, and stage rigging will also be replaced.

A second phase of updates that includes a new orchestra shell was delayed as a result of the COVID-19 crisis but will be completed this year.



# MEET the DEAN

*Familiar face takes on new role*

By Michelle Rupe Eubanks '96  
For the UNA Magazine

*Dr. Sara Lynn Baird has been named the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, and as the vocal performer explains, each day brings new opportunities to create a top-notch academic experience for all of the students enrolled in these programs.*

**Q: Tell us what a typical day entails – from arriving in the office to meetings and decisions to when you go home for the evening.**

**A:** Much of my time on most days is occupied by a variety of meetings with office personnel, upper administration, department chairs, other faculty and staff, external entities, and, occasionally, students. Between meetings, I try to answer the many emails that arrive each day. I'm fortunate to have an excellent group of folks in the COAS's Dean's Office to whom I can delegate many of these daily tasks, particular initiatives, and ongoing issues. I teach a Tuesday/Thursday class each spring, which gives me the opportunity to interact with and influence students as they prepare for careers in music.

**Q: How do you hope to influence the next generation of UNA students through your new role?**

**A:** During my time as Dean, I hope to advance the college in increasing our efforts for inclusion and diversity; mentorship for faculty, staff, and students; opportunities for students to participate in experiential learning; and effective communication at all levels. Anything that we do as administrators should be driven by the goal to improve the education experience for our students. I hope that my administrative tenure helps impart to students a desire to learn, to expand their horizons and experiences, to achieve skills in critical thinking and problem solving, to develop the ability to work collaboratively, to

“Anything that we do as administrators should be driven by the goal to improve the education experience for our students.

---

develop new perspectives, and to expand their skills in innovation.

**Q: The COAS is the largest of the five at UNA. How does that change how decisions are made, and how does it influence your role?**

**A:** I don't know that size changes the way that we make decisions, but it certainly means that we must involve more people in our discussions about priorities, goals, and initiatives. With 19 departments and a School of the Arts, a wide variety of units with different goals, needs, and perspectives must participate in developing the goals of the college, determining how budgets are allocated and spent, and forming direction and prioritization of ideas and initiatives. We accomplish this with regular department chair meetings, a number of COAS faculty committees that have the autonomy to make decisions, and a concerted effort to provide a timely and thorough communication with appropriate personnel. As Dean, my goal is to function as a facilitator for faculty, staff, and students to attain their highest possible achievement, which informs every decision I make as Dean.

**Q: Why did you want to take on this role?**

**A:** Most faculty members don't start their academic careers with the goal of becoming an administrator. I certainly didn't. My first administrative role was suggested to me while I was at Louisiana State University. With some reluctance, I accepted and found that I enjoyed the work and the broader view of the institution that I had previously as a faculty member. After my first year at UNA, I knew I had made a good decision to come here. When Dean Burkhalter retired, it was a complete surprise, but I felt that with my previous experience and the respect that I had developed over that year for our faculty, staff,

administration, and students, I could provide effective leadership for the college.

**Q: Tell us what led you to UNA.**

**A:** In 2016, I was invited as a consultant for the Department of Music here at UNA to assess all aspects of the program, curricula, personnel, and facilities. I was tremendously impressed with the quality of the faculty, students, and administration and also with the strong commitment to student success that was evident in every interaction during my visit. Drs. Terrance and Tiffany Brown, who had been students at LSU while I was there, were also influential in my decision to come to UNA, primarily by informing me of opportunities here. When I learned of the Associate Dean opening, my experience as a visitor here led me to apply. UNA appeared to be an excellent institution with strong faculty and administration, and the emphasis on students was very important to me. As my knowledge of UNA has grown, I have found that these qualities are indeed hallmarks of the institution.

**Q: Finally, you have an incredible talent with music, and that's your field of study. What role does that play in how you serve as Dean?**

**A:** If there is any drawback to my role as Dean, it is that I don't have the opportunity to make music by conducting a choral ensemble. I have remained very active in my professional organization, American Choral Directors Association (ACDA), and have served as regional president, national board president, conference chair, and as a member of many conference committees. At the March 2020 ACDA Southern Region Conference, I was humbled and exhilarated to be selected by my colleagues as the recipient of the ACDA Southern Region Award of Excellence. I can't imagine a better place than UNA for the culmination of my academic career.

## IN BRIEF

- Through the efforts of the Alumni Association, the John Paul White Scholarship was endowed in 2013, honoring UNA alumnus and Grammy winner John Paul White. White has performed two benefit shows to increase the endowment, the most recent of which took place Dec. 4. The 2019-20 John Paul White Scholarship winners, Bay Simpson and Alli Carruth, performed as part of the show. Both students will also be part of a class White will teach in October that will focus on songwriting, production, artistry, and creativity. The next benefit show is scheduled for Dec. 2.
- The College of Arts and Sciences will add three new degree programs to the more than 60 majors and minors that are already in place. The new programs are:
  - A BFA in Cinematic Arts and Theater, which is designed to prepare graduates for careers and/or graduate-level studies in Cinematic Arts and Theatre.
  - The MS in Applied Manufacturing Engineering, which is designed for current engineering and science professionals as well as new engineering graduates who want to improve their ability to solve real-world manufacturing problems.
  - The Master of Social Work will train students in advanced generalist practice of social work and will primarily serve the north Alabama, Mississippi, and Tennessee regions.

# *Dispatches from the Front*

## UNA Faculty, students fight pandemic as part of COVID-19 research team

By Dr. Cynthia Stenger, For the *UNA Magazine*

In January, scientists released the genetic code for SARA-CoV-2, the virus which causes COVID-19.

The release of the complete genome sequence was the signal researchers needed to begin the race to decipher the viral code, providing vital information which would be foundational for vaccines, pharmaceuticals, and other tools needed to fight the pandemic.

Among those from the University of North Alabama on these front lines of the fight were Dr. Jared Painter and Dr. Cynthia Stenger, he an assistant professor and she a professor, both in the Department of Math. The pair joined the COVID-19 Consortium in early March, contributing molecular dynamics simulation modeling for proteins associated with the virus.

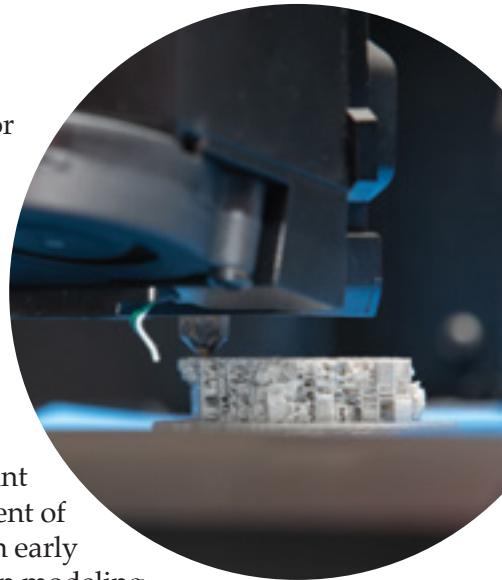
"Contributing in some small part to understanding and taming this virus is helpful to our collective psyches," said Dr. Stenger. "We were fortunate to have existing partnerships in place with top-tier bioinformatics researchers through our involvement in the Characterizing DNA Exceptions (CODE) class. This fall marks the third year working with students in the CODE class, and the benefits to them are tangible, from internships to co-authoring papers and presentations."

Ethan Hood was among the students in the CODE class. His work with the COVID-19 Consortium focuses on analyzing the structure of the spike protein in SARS-CoV-2 and how it infects host cells with its relationship to ACE2. In association with the Prokop lab, this project also provides educational resources through the 3D modeling of the protein, to help show how COVID-19 spreads.

At the inception of the project, Dr. Stenger and the CODE class were already two years into the bioinformatics research with a Genetic Research Partnership, including researchers, scientists, and student interns from Hudson / Alpha Institute for Biotechnology, the Department of Pediatrics and Human Development, the Department of Pharmacology and Toxicology at Michigan State University, and others.

Before the pandemic, student researchers joined forces to classify variants of uncertain significance observed in children with SLC6A1, which is a rare childhood disease. The bioinformatics crowd-sourcing project included nine UNA biology, computer science / math, and chemistry students; 11 Jacksonville State University biology students who worked under the direction of Dr. Stenger; JSU biology professor Dr. Benjie Blair; and MSU genetics professor Dr. Jeremy Prokop.

The CODE class allows students to earn upper division math credit applicable toward a minor in mathematics. Students engage in research using bioinformatics techniques to study how changes in our genome can affect disease. To date, UNA team members are coauthors on cystic fibrosis and HIV-AIDS paper submissions and are involved in several other ongoing projects.



# Lasting Legacy

Memory is such a funny thing. We remember things through all of our senses, and something as simple as the smell of cornbread cooking or the sound of a knife chopping Brussels sprouts can trigger intense memories. Jeffrey Charles Eubanks, '96, died in February and he will be remembered in myriad ways — and the legacy of his career as a chef will live on through the naming of the Jeff Eubanks Culinary Arts Program on the East Campus of the University of North Alabama and allow students to create their own culinary memories.

The naming was approved one month after Jeff's passing at the March 6, UNA Board of Trustees meeting.

"The Jeff Eubanks Endowment for Culinary Arts at UNA recognizes an extraordinary chef and member of our community who generously provided his time and expertise in support of our culinary students," said Dr. Sara Lynn Baird, Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, under which the Culinary Arts Program falls. "His legacy will live on in this endowment, which will benefit our excellent culinary program and students with support for equipment, facilities, and classroom supplies for years to come. We are excited about the possibilities that this creates for UNA's curriculum, faculty, and students to further enhance their excellence and preparation for careers in culinary arts."

The fundraising effort was spearheaded by those at the Marriott Shoals Hotel and Spa, where Eubanks was executive chef, as well as by his fraternity, Phi Gamma Delta.

"Jeff had a passion for his family, UNA, brotherhood, and cooking," said Macke Mauldin, a fellow member of the fraternity as well as Bank Independent President. "I'm proud that his brothers at UNA's Phi Gamma Delta chapter and others came together to honor his memory and passion in a way that benefits future generations of students. Their generosity adds to his legacy and demonstrates the admiration and love we all have for Jeff, his family, and UNA."

Larry Bowser, the general manager of the Marriott, said the gift allows for the preservation of Eubanks' legacy for future culinary students.

"We were blessed to have Jeff as part of our Marriott Shoals family as our Executive Chef, where his contributions played a large role in the Hotel's success," he said. "His passion for cooking was only exceeded by his passion for teaching others about the culinary arts. He always worked hard to help his staff learn and grow personally and professionally. Jeff's leadership philosophy was built on a foundation of patience, love, and kindness, which enabled his team to build confidence and brought out their best qualities and talents. Jeff poured his heart and soul into the dishes he prepared."

Culinary Arts Program  
named for Eubanks  
By Michelle Rupe Eubanks '96  
For the *UNA Magazine*





# UNA Launches First Doctoral Program

EDBA Offered through the College of Business

By Guy McClure '84  
For the UNA Magazine

The College of Business will launch the Executive Doctor of Business Administration degree in January of 2021, making it the first doctoral program at the University of North Alabama, pending the upcoming approval by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commissions on Colleges.

"The evolution of UNA as a doctoral-granting institution is noteworthy and significant," said Dr. Ross Alexander, Executive Vice President and Provost. "It places us in a higher class of peers across the state and region. The EDBA is another example of the curricular and instructional innovation emanating from the College of Business. I commend Dean [Greg] Carnes and the College of Business faculty for their foresight in crafting and implementing this exciting new degree program."

The EDBA program is designed to prepare students to address organizational challenges and disruptive trends by developing applied executive-level research skills. Further, the program will enable graduates

to solve complex business and industry problems with creative and innovative solutions.

"As the first doctoral program in the College of Business, this EDBA program will offer a post-MBA research pathway for those seeking to advance their positions," said Dr. Wes Davenport, Director of Graduate Business Programs. "We are well-prepared to welcome the first cohort and have put together a comprehensive curriculum and experienced faculty to ensure a seamless matriculation."

This non-resident, cohort-based doctorate program is offered primarily online, with monthly on-campus sessions that cover a three-year period of study. The EDBA program was created to assist members of an experienced workforce seeking to advance within an organization or transition into a career in consulting or higher education. It will provide working professionals the necessary research tools to theorize their professional experience and produce academic research of the highest quality.

# RISE and ROAR

## *UNA Professor's Podcast Focuses on Business Leadership*

By Guy McClure '84 | For the UNA Magazine

Dr. Justin Carter, Assistant Professor of Management at the University of North Alabama, recently launched a podcast, "Rise and Roar," that features discussions with business leaders across all industries on current topics and trends.

"I realized through my personal network of colleagues and friends that I have access to a broad knowledge base," he said. "These conversations were already happening, and, by creating this podcast, I found a way to disseminate that information not only to my students but to the public at large."

Launching the podcast shortly after the COVID-19 quarantine became mandatory allowed Carter the opportunity to address the challenging crisis from a business standpoint.

"When I heard Justin would be launching his 'Rise and Roar' podcast, I reached out immediately and let him know I wanted to be a guest," said Robert Steele, a 1978 UNA graduate, and an Executive Business Council and Foundation Board member as well as a recent interviewee. "It's an ingenious way to reach a global audience and expand the brand of the University, while also providing students valuable insight into the psychology of business leaders. There is no limit where he can take this, and I am glad the University is supporting his efforts."

Other initial broadcasts include

insights from Strategic Planning Facilitator Jim Sisson; "The Retail Doctor," Bob Phipps; and the President and CEO of the West Alabama Chamber of Commerce Jim Page. Debut episodes dealt directly with the effect of the COVID-19 crisis on the local and national economy.

"Experiential learning is a key emphasis in the College of Business," said Dr. Greg Carnes, Dean of the College of Business. "Due to the COVID-19 crisis, one must think outside the box to continue to provide students with the best learning opportunities. Dr. Carter has found a way to do this."

Carter admits he has limited experience with podcasts before launching "Rise and Roar," but he said he quickly learned how to make use of the online broadcasting tool.

"At first, it was an experiment in trial and error," he said. "But I was looking for a new challenge and wanted this to be a learning experience for me as well, and that's certainly what I got."

"'Rise and Roar' is sponsored by the College of Business and is available for download on iTunes, Spotify, Google Play, Podcast Addict, and will soon be available on iHeartRadio.





# LEVELING UP

## Homewood Man Takes His Career to the Next Level with an Online MBA

By Guy McClure '84  
For the *UNA Magazine*

Originally from Guntersville, Spence Henderson graduated from the University of Denver in 2008 with a degree in geography. For almost a decade after, he worked for several companies in Geographic Information Systems.

As a full-time employee, he completed his MBA online from the University of North Alabama. After graduation, he was promoted from GIS work to a Senior Analyst/Project Management position.

It didn't take long for Spence to know he wanted to explore his strong interest in business and economics.

"The more I looked into graduate programs and degree options, the more an MBA appealed to me," he said. "Not only do you learn business

fundamentals, but the career options are endless. Every business and company requires the skills an MBA provides, and this seemed like a great degree to pursue."

Spence considered convenience and flexibility, quality, and affordability when making his decision, and, after a lot of research, he concluded that UNA's MBA program checked all the boxes. Since he was working full-time, the fact that the MBA program was entirely online and offered eight-week terms was a big selling factor.

UNA's AACSB accreditation and great reputation, enhanced by the fact that he had friends and family who had attended and love it, were also big pluses. The curriculum options were attractive, too. As the largest MBA program in Alabama, with approximately 900 students, UNA has the resources to provide courses for a wide range of specialties. Finally, affordability sealed the deal. The entire MBA program costs less than \$18,000,

which is a major consideration for working professionals.

Before he started the program, Spence said he was nervous about balancing his full-time job while making sure he understood the courses and material. Once he began, his worries quickly subsided.

"UNA helped by providing guidance on the progression of classes I should take over the course of the MBA program," he said. "I specifically remember the first two classes being a soft entry into the program, so we wouldn't be overwhelmed at the start. As I continued with the courses, I learned new material along the way which built upon itself and prepared me for the next courses."

College of Business Dean Greg Carnes agreed that support is a key component of student success.

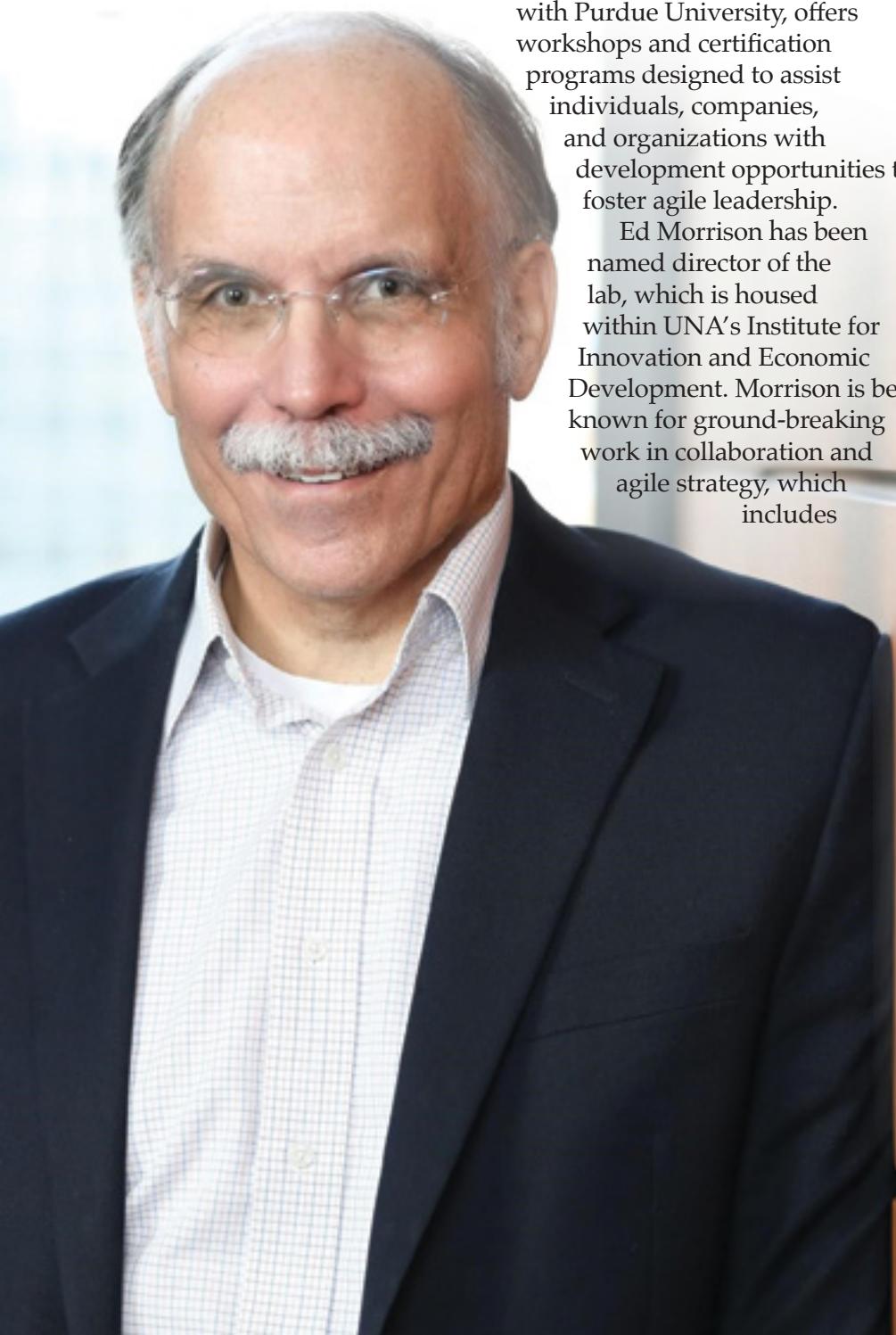
"We pride ourselves on the effort we make to help students by providing strong customer service and student resources," he said. "We work closely with students to remove any hassles or hiccups that may come along, so they can focus on their school work without unnecessary distractions."

*Reprinted with permission from BirminghamNow.*

# Strategically Doing

Strategy Lab Promotes Agile Leadership Development

By Guy McClure '84 | For the UNA Magazine



The Agile Strategy Lab at the University of North Alabama, a recently developed partnership with Purdue University, offers workshops and certification programs designed to assist individuals, companies, and organizations with development opportunities to foster agile leadership.

Ed Morrison has been named director of the lab, which is housed within UNA's Institute for Innovation and Economic Development. Morrison is best known for ground-breaking work in collaboration and agile strategy, which includes

assisting clients throughout the United States and many international locations.

"Joining UNA is exciting for a number of reasons," Morrison said. "First, the University is innovative and experimental. People move fast. Second, the College of Business is nationally recognized for its online graduate programs. The future of our work will be to extend online training in Strategic Doing into different management sectors. Working with the College of Business puts us on the frontier of the rapidly emerging field of open innovation."

The Agile Strategy Lab includes the following offerings:

- Strategic Doing
- Strategic Diversity
- Agile Leadership
- Rapid Improvement using Lean Tools
- Agile Innovation
- Innovation Engineering

"To have someone of Ed Morrison's significance joining the Institute for Innovation and Economic Development will be a game changer for UNA's ability to promote economic growth in this region and beyond," said Dr. Greg Carnes, Dean of the College of Business. "His wealth of experience and proven leadership in strategic regional development will create many opportunities for collaboration and innovation."

# In the Details

*Laura M. Harrison Hall set to open, offers bright, modern facility*

**By Michelle Rupe Eubanks '96**  
**For the UNA Magazine**

There have been days when Michael Gautney wasn't sure the Laura M. Harrison Hall would, in fact, rise from the ground and serve the students, faculty, and staff of the Anderson College of Nursing and Health Professions.

"The project has been very difficult due to the record amount of rain we have received since the beginning of the project," said the Assistant Vice President of Facilities at the University of North Alabama. "For the record, it's been more than 100 inches."

Still, work has persisted, and the building, which is nearing completion at press time, is an impressive and modern facility which will be in use for the nursing students entering in the Fall of 2020. Faculty within the department are ready to make the transition from Stevens Hall, where the College has been housed for decades, to Harrison Hall.

"We will have much more room!" said ACONHP Dean Vicki Pierce. "The classrooms are significantly larger. This is important given our current public health situation [COVID-19] because we will have more space between students when we are able to return to campus. Also, many faculty do not have an office. In the new building, all faculty will have a designated office space, and the furnishings in the new space are very nice."

With the room comes the ability to spread out and ensure that there is adequate space for all aspects of learning, from the simulation lab (a key feature of the process for nursing students) to the computer labs.

Dr. Tera Kirkman, Associate Dean of the ACONHP, said Harrison Hall would be a "major relief to faculty."

"For instance, many of the exams administered in the undergraduate program for pre-licensure students are conducted online in a computer lab," Dr. Kirkman said. "Over the years, faculty have found it challenging to find a computer lab to administer these exams. The additional space in the new building will provide more opportunities, thus minimizing the challenges faculty experience."



# ANDERSON COLLEGE OF NURSING AND HEALTH PROFESSIONS





The simulation lab is also larger and more sophisticated. Further, it's designed to mimic a hospital and will have similar technology that graduates will use in their day-to-day care of patients in the healthcare setting.

In addition to the lab itself, Dean Pierce said around one million dollars has been spent on simulation mannequins and another one million on other healthcare equipment, including a Pyxis medication dispenser, IV pumps, hospital beds, a PPE station, and a crash cart. These purchases ensure that the simulation is as close to the real thing as possible.

Classrooms are also being outfitted with Apple TV, which faculty are being trained to use as part of their teaching.

"Having the latest technological modalities available in the new building will give students exposure to rare clinical skills and scenarios that are limited in the hospital setting," said Dr. Kirkman. "These opportunities will be beneficial to our undergraduate pre-licensure and graduate nurse practitioner students."

Dr. Kirkman and Dean Pierce agree that the large windows and bright hallways and classrooms will further enhance the setting to create an environment conducive to learning and healthcare.

"It will be a bright, cheerful environment in which students, faculty, and staff will have a pleasant space to work, study, and learn," Dean Pierce said.

The open floor plan, along with the large curved windows and distinctive architectural features were all by design and in keeping with the University's well-known and historical elements, including the limestone-framed windows that are similar to other buildings on campus.

Gautney said construction costs were at \$18.8 million, while the additional furnishings and equipment added another \$4 million to the cost. The total project cost was just under \$23 million.

The ACONHP enrollment is growing and adding new programs, including the family nurse practitioner program, many of which have waiting lists for applicants. Dr. Kirkman said this enhanced the need for a new facility.

"It's a reflection of our success and growth the ACONHP has experienced over the years," she said. "It will serve as a marker of excellence for years to come."



# Partners on the Journey

## *Pandemic shapes present, future of education*

By Michelle Rupe Eubanks '96 | For the *UNA Magazine*

---

When the Spring 2020 semester began, College of Education and Human Sciences (COEHS) Dean Katie Kinney was prepared for lots of things – the launch of some new programs and the expansion of others, welcoming a new cohort of students and ensuring them a top-notch experience.

What she couldn't have prepared for – what no one could prepare for, really – was a global pandemic. On March 16, just a week before Spring Break, the University of North Alabama shifted to a remote/distance learning model that persisted through the Spring 2020 semester. As a result, Kinney and her faculty, along with the students in the program, shifted as well. In the weeks since, Dean Kinney said she's come to realize that education as she has known it has been altered forever.

"Teaching is a developmental process, and teachers must keep learning and honing skills as they navigate their path to becoming great in their practice," she said. "The impact of COVID-19 is a great example of how teachers must continually evaluate their practice and adapt to meet the needs of all learners. So, as we move forward in preparing teachers, we will continue to emphasize and explore new strategies to focus on the importance of content knowledge, a variety of teaching skills, and professional dispositions that comprise the preparation of an effective teacher."

These are lessons she and her faculty learned by doing.

As a means of assisting parents faced with the teaching of their children at home as schools across the region, state, and nation shifted to this online/remote learning environment, teacher candidates helped in the launch of [youruna.edu](http://youruna.edu) by adding content and resources for parents.

Also, "our teacher candidates engaged in their internship experiences continued to support their cooperating teachers and schools through collaboration and innovation and moving instruction online for their P-12 students," Dean Kinney said. "Our counselor candidates involved in internship placements pivoted to engage in telemental health counseling in collaboration with their site placement supervisors."

Throughout the process, she said she heard from alumni about their experiences and how their work in the COEHS and at UNA prepared them for this very new and very unusual reality.

"The feedback we have received has included the prevailing theme of our alumni doing 'whatever it takes,'" Dean Kinney said. "Our alumni are involved in efforts such as distributing food, preparing remote instruction and Zoom conferences, and responding to social/emotional needs for P-12 learners. On the other hand, many of our alumni have expressed their sadness at



not being able to have closure to the school year. After all, schools are more than schools, and teachers are more than teachers. Both are essential to learning and to the development of our most valuable resource – our children.”

Members of the COEHS faculty have also been affected by the shift in learning environments, but Kinney said it’s been for the better.

“We share the core belief that all learners matter, and we will go to any lengths necessary to make sure the needs of learners are met,” she said. “With that core value in mind, our faculty and students have swiftly explored and mastered technology tools with the goal of best serving all learners.”

Despite the social distancing standards that became the norm during the course of much of 2020,

faculty agreed that the situation was one that served to bring them closer to their students and graduates, allowing them to build bridges to learning via technology.

“The culture of embracing online instruction and willingness and spirit of tech support and faculty experienced in online teaching made the transition not only possible but about as seamless and flawless as could have been expected,” said Dr. Chris James, Director of Teacher Education and Associate Professor of Instructional Leadership in the COEHS and a member of its leadership team. “Based on feedback from other universities, UNA has performed exceptionally well.”

Because the situation was so fluid, faculty often found themselves in reaction mode, being

open-minded and creative in their responses to challenges as they arose. It allowed them to become more pliant and resilient as the crisis evolved.

Like Kinney Dr. Matt Green, Associate Dean and Professor of Kinesiology in the COEHS, and others on the faculty, found themselves responding directly to parents, encouraging them to be patient and seek help when needed.

“As a parent, the current situation has reminded me that those who invest their lives to teach our children are heroes,” Dr. Green said. “We should never take them for granted. I would advise parents to extend extra efforts to thank the teachers who have gone above and beyond to make a positive impact on their children, even in the most challenging of situations.”

## IN BRIEF



- Dr. Rebecca Hopkins and Laiken Mann, graduate assistant in the Collaborative Special Education program, piloted the ROAR Postsecondary Transitions Life Skills classes for young adults with intellectual disabilities on the UNA campus. Dr. Hopkins and Ms. Mann are conducting single-case design research on the use of video-modeling with peer mentors on participant acquisition of specific job skills.

- Dr. Terri Garrison was granted \$22,500 from Alabama's Department of Early Childhood to embed the Teaching Strategies GOLD Assessment Platform and the Creative Curriculum strategies and best practices for early childhood coursework for UNA's early childhood education preservice candidates.

- Kilby Laboratory School was named a Blue Ribbon Lighthouse School of Excellence in September after a visit by the national organization that recognizes schools for their high academic achievement and high-quality school programs. Kilby either met or exceeded the nine critical standards that guided an assessment process that examined Kilby's academic programs, school culture, and overall school effectiveness as an institution of learning.

- Under the direction of Library Media Specialist Misty Buerhaus, Kilby was able to send a First Lego League Team and a VEX Robotics Team to competitions at the local, regional, and state levels. The teams were comprised of diverse groups of students in Grades 3-6.

- Teacher candidates in ED 440, Materials and Methods for Teaching English Language Arts, participated in the campus "One Book" program by reading the 2019-2020 selection, *Just Mercy* by Byron Stephenson. After facilitating connections to various campus events, Dr. Jessica Mitchell, associate professor and ED 440 instructor, collaborated with Mrs. Susan DeArman, Advanced Placement English teacher at Russellville High School, to create a clinical experience for teacher candidates to share this programming with high school students.

- Directed by the UNA Human Performance Research Group, the eighth "Bad Kitty" trail race took place in February. The race has become a popular event for runners as it takes place in 10K and 5K increments on the rugged and beautiful trails of Wildwood Park. More than 150 runners participated, including those from China and Saudi Arabia.

- Dr. Kevin B. Stoltz of UNA and Dr. Susan R. Barclay of the University of Central Arkansas were invited to co-edit a publication project focused on developing a new edition of the National Career Development Association's bestselling book, *A Counselor's Guide to Career Assessment*. Drs. Stoltz and Barclay committed five years to the project and developed a new print edition and created an online database website of career assessment information. The project was published in 2019 and is recognized as the world's leading source for career assessment information.

- During the 2019-2020 academic year, Dr. Michael Stocz was listed as either the corresponding author or co-author to four new law reviews, each of which constitutes a peer-reviewed publication. These law reviews are in press and will be featured in both the *Physical Educator* and the *Journal of Physical Education, Recreation & Dance*.

- Two students, Elisa Coker and Erin Creasy, were awarded the unique Badge of Diversity and Inclusion in Education. They are the first to achieve this goal. A badge is similar to a micro-credential for students; it is designed to focus on experiential learning opportunities outside of traditional classroom instruction.

# GETTING [BACK]

## *COVID-19 takes toll on spring sports at UNA*

By Michelle Rupe Eubanks '96  
*For the UNA Magazine*

All aspects of campus life were disrupted during the Spring 2020 semester as a result of the COVID-19 crisis, and the pandemic exacted a hefty price from UNA Athletics, forcing a cancellation of all spring sports and affecting student-athletes in unprecedented ways.

UNA Athletics Director Mark Linder provided some insights into the spring as well as a look ahead to fall sports and what fans can expect in the weeks and months to come.

**Q: Spring sports were disrupted this year. Can you provide readers with an update as to the decision from ASUN and how it affected UNA Athletics?**

**A:** On March 11, the entire world changed when it was announced that COVID-19 was considered a pandemic. Our women's basketball team has just hosted

a tremendously exciting ASUN Semifinal Tournament game in Flowers Hall, and our spring sports were gearing up for their ASUN regular seasons to begin. However, on March 12, the world of athletics began to feel the impact of the pandemic. The National Basketball Association (NBA) began to cancel games, and other sporting events followed suit. We had UNA teams driving to competitions, only to be told to return to campus as soon as possible. Shortly thereafter, the ASUN made the decision to cancel the remainder of the spring sports seasons in order to protect our student-athletes, staff, and communities. The NCAA implemented a 'dead period,' restricting all face-to-face recruiting activities for our coaches that will last until at least May 31. During the initial phase of the fallout, conversations started to take place about those

spring sport seniors who had prepared all year to play their spring season, only to have it come to an immediate halt – no more games, no more practices, no more bus trips, no senior day, etc. As those questions were still unanswered, other questions began to, and continue to, emerge. What about academics? How about eligibility? Can we have individual workouts? What impact is this going to have on the budget? Will there be a college football season? So many questions. So many uncertainties. On some days, it truly feels like we are trying to get a drink of water from a fire hose.

**Q: Tell us about the student-athletes in all sports and how this decision has affected them.**

**A:** Our student-athletes have demonstrated tremendous character through these difficult times. For the spring student-athletes, they were all tremendously disappointed. Imagine having prepared all year and not be able to complete your season. For student-athletes in other sports, most of them were gearing up to start



# IN THE GAME

training for next season. However, when the ‘stay-at-home’ order was issued from Montgomery, all of our athletics facilities were closed, and our student-athletes lost access. Our student-athletes are growing accustomed to the virtual world by attending study sessions, watching training videos, and meeting coaches to watch film as they prepare for next season, all online.

**Q: Tell us about the coaching staff and how they have adjusted their routines.**

**A:** Our staff has been incredible. The coaches are working from home. They have been recruiting through technology, checking on the well-being of our student-athletes, and encouraging our student-athletes to finish strong academically. Our coaches possess such a strong work ethic and a passion for excellence that it didn’t take them long to start using technology to prepare for the upcoming seasons.

**Q: As we look toward the fall,**

**can you tell us what UNA’s fan base can expect?**

**A:** We have really taken the months of April and May to evaluate our entire department. We committed to using those two months to better ourselves, from game operations to internal operations. So, when the experts say that we are ready to resume competition, the UNA fan base should expect excellent Division I competition while having confidence that our staff has been working diligently to ensure all of our events are safe, family friendly, memory-filled, and community-focused.

**Q: What are ways UNA’s loyal fans can help – the athletes, the programs, the coaches?**

**A:** Internally, we (UNA Athletics) spend a lot of time discussing our culture of excellence and not allowing fear to reduce who we are. You ask me how the UNA loyal fans can help. I would ask that they partner with us as we resume life. Partner with us in our commitment to refining our

culture of excellence, and do not let fear reduce who they are. We are Lions. We are strong. We are social. We are overcomers. We are champions. We are ‘United as One.’ Therefore, if people desire to help, I would encourage them to give philanthropically to the ‘Champions of the Pride’ fund, become a Sportsman’s Club member, do business with our corporate sponsors, buy season tickets, wear UNA merchandise, get a UNA car tag, or any number of other things that would show that they support the UNA mission of ‘Graduating Champions!’

**Q: Finally, any update on the Sportsman’s Club event taking place in August?**

**A:** The Sportsman’s Club is hosting a Dinner and Auction to kick off the 2020-21 athletics year. The guest speaker is Mr. Pete Rose. Originally scheduled for Aug. 13, the event has been postponed. It will be a great night to connect with the Lions.



A large, stylized Tennessee Titans logo is positioned on the left side of the page, partially cut off by a vertical tear in the paper. The logo features a blue circle containing a white 'T' and three red stars. Behind it are blue and white wavy lines resembling flames or water. Above the logo is a white outline of a football field with yard lines and a circular pattern of 'X's and arrows indicating a play. Below the logo is a large dollar sign (\$) symbol.

# TITAN UP

## Students clinch opportunities for NFL ticketing and sales

By Kali Daniel '16  
For the UNA Magazine

Within one year, the University went from having zero students to work with the Tennessee Titans to having seven total students working for the NFL team.

"Most universities have very little placement for interns, gameday positions, or full-time jobs within the NFL right out of school," said Dr. Michael Stocz, assistant professor of Sport and Recreation Management. "At the three universities I attended, I can remember three students finding jobs immediately out of school with NFL franchises."

Students often have to work their way into these positions by starting off in college sports or minor leagues, Stocz said, and most only have one intern per year.

In August 2019, Nathan Elliott became the first enrolled UNA student to accept a sales internship position with the Titans, one of five positions offered in a pool of more than 20 candidates. Elliott graduated with a Bachelor of Science in Sports Management in December 2019, and after performing well in his internship, he was asked to stay on for an additional year as an inside sales representative.

"Experience learned from the UNA sales program helps set me apart tremendously," Elliott said. "Dr. Stocz does a great job of letting us know that internships, experience, and connections are the most important part of us landing jobs post-grad, [and UNA builds] those relationships with teams that provide students the opportunity to gain that experience."

Joey Meredith, manager of inside sales for the Tennessee Titans, said opportunities from the Steele Center for Professional Selling have solidified and strengthened the relationship between the Titans' sales team and the University.

"We have attended more than five Sales Fairs at UNA which allowed us to interact with students

from the Steele Center as well as the sports management major," Meredith said.

He said UNA students stand out from others in that the interns are "great people with a sense of self-imposed excellence about them."

UNA students set themselves apart through determination and drive, but they also come from a variety of backgrounds that highlight diverse sales skills, Meredith said.

When alumna Sara Bayles accepted an internship with the Tennessee Titans in 2019, she had previously completed an internship at Yellowstone National Park.

"I wanted the interviewers to see how crucial I was in a team environment, but also how I was able to relate to the general public," Bayles said. "I drew mainly from my experiences in Yellowstone and how well I was able to solve problems and create these relationships, to use that to encourage people to keep coming back to the park. This resulted in me being completely different from the other candidates in a great way, as the Titans wanted people on their team who put their fans first."

Bayles, who graduated with a Bachelor of Science in Outdoor Recreation in 2017 and a Master of Science in Sports Management in 2018, is the former manager for operations for the Rocket City Trash Pandas minor league baseball team in Madison, Alabama.

"Each day, I was engaging with our fan base, listening to issues, fixing problems, and again, creating an exceptional experience for each and every one of our fans," she said. "We prided ourselves on taking the extra step, and working for the Titans definitely prepared me for that."

Learning the skills and building them in the classroom provides a quality foundation for sales, Elliott said, but nothing can really compare to experience. He said the Steele Center provides students with that additional component to excel in the real world.

"We are harboring a culture of excellence with

a network to back it up," Stocz said.

Because of that relationship, "UNA students are receiving unique, hands-on opportunities in one of the most popular and reputable leagues," Meredith said.

Meredith also works with interns and the Steele Center to identify potential students to help with game days and volunteer opportunities like the Tennessee Titans Learning Lab – a leadership event that introduces local high school students to careers in sports.

Case Baughman graduated in May with a degree in Sports Management, and his love for the Titans combined with his zeal for sales

experience encouraged him not only to volunteer at the Learning Lab but work as a Ticketing Specialist on game days.

"To have a calm and collected person talking to an angry customer is key to keeping the image of the company [positive]," Baughman said. "I believe no matter what job you are in, you have to deal with difficult people, and having the skills to deal with those people is important."

Students who want the opportunity to work with the NFL have a direct pipeline to doing so, but the work isn't easy.

"You have to be willing to do what others are not," Baughman said, recalling the 6 a.m. wake-up times for game days and earlier for Learning Labs.

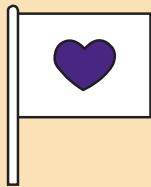
Elliott said making connections and engaging campus resources can be invaluable to post-grad living, like attending career fairs and volunteering with UNA Athletics.

"The only reason that I'm with the Titans now is because of making connections and staying in touch with those connections," he said. "If you meet someone at a job fair or their place of work, write them a handwritten note. In such a competitive field, it is important to set yourself apart, and [UNA] is doing a phenomenal job of preparing students for sales jobs right out of college."

## **"We are harboring a culture of excellence with a network to back it up."**

**Dr. Michael Stocz**  
*Assistant Professor of Sport and Recreation Management*

# SPIRIT WEEK



MISS YOU MONDAY  
APRIL 13



WELLNESS WEDNESDAY  
APRIL 15



TEAM TUESDAY  
APRIL 14

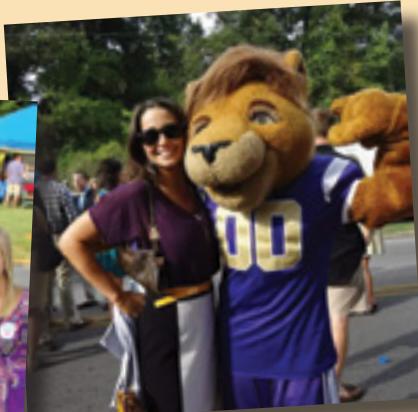


As the COVID-19 pandemic challenged us to socially distance ourselves from each other, the extended Lion family of alumni and friends around the globe came together via social media. As part of a concerted campaign initiated by UNA Alumni Relations, individuals took to Facebook and Instagram to have a virtual Spirit Week.

From "Miss You Monday" to "Friend Friday" and each day in between, alumni shared their purple-and-gold pride with creativity and spirit.



## THROWBACK THURSDAY APRIL 16



## FRIEND FRIDAY APRIL 17



Homecoming 2019 took place Sept. 27-28 and included spirited reunions, a parade, a Lion win on the gridiron, and a number of other events. Among those honored with Homecoming awards were:

**Alumnus of the Year:** John Paul White, '99

**Lifetime Achievement:** John Thomas McGee, '58

**Community Service:** Patsy "Pat" Davis Burney, '88

**Faculty/Staff Service:** Kelly McGregor Ford, '94

**Military Service:** William Riley Brewer III, '82

**Political Service:** Sen. Timothy Ivan Melson, '82

**Educator of the Year:** David Brian Bailey, '96

**Friend of the University:** Anne Marie Howard





## THURSDAY, OCTOBER 29

- 8 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. 16th Geography Alumni Conference  
*Wesleyan Hall*
- 8 p.m. Homecoming Pep Rally  
*Memorial Amphitheater; Rain location: Flowers Hall*

## FRIDAY, OCTOBER 30

- 8 a.m. - 1 p.m. Jack Karnes Memorial Golf Tournament  
*Cypress Lakes Golf and Tennis Facility*
- 8 a.m. - 3 p.m. 16th Geography Alumni Conference  
*Wesleyan Hall*
- 4 - 6 p.m. "Through the Years" Pop-up Museum  
*Collier Library*
- 6 - 7:30 p.m. Homecoming Alumni Awards Banquet  
*Guillot University Center Banquet Halls*
- 7 p.m. North Alabama Volleyball vs. NJIT  
*Flowers Hall*
- 8 p.m. 5th NPHC Stroll Off  
*Norton Auditorium*

## SATURDAY, OCTOBER 31

- 8 - 9 a.m. SGA Past Officer's Breakfast  
*GUC Loft*
- 9 - 10 a.m. Athletic Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony  
*GUC Performance Center*
- 9 - 10 a.m. UNA LaGrange Society Reunion  
*Coby Hall*
- 10:30 - 11:30 a.m. Homecoming Parade  
*Pine Street and Court Street*
- 11:30 a.m. - 2:30 p.m. Homecoming Tailgate  
*Spirit Hill*
- 12:45 p.m. Lion Walk  
*Spirit Hill*
- 2:20 p.m. Homecoming Pre-game Show  
*Braly Stadium*
- 3 p.m. UNA Football vs. Gardner-Webb University  
*Braly Stadium*



*All scheduled events are subject to change.*

# Dear Alumni and Friends,

What a time to be alive. With each day we are given a new set of standards by which we are asked to live our daily lives, and those standards may be created by our own means or by someone giving us guidelines. The good news is that we are not alone. We are in this together.

I have been pleased, but not surprised, to see our alumni jumping in to help others with their gifts and talents. Fred Rogers once said, "Some days, doing 'the best we can' may still fall short of what we would like to be able to do, but life isn't perfect on any front – and doing what we can with what we have is the most we should expect of ourselves or anyone else." I hope we carry this spirit of graciousness we feel with us into the time of well-being.

As the President of the National Alumni Association, this year has certainly looked different than others. I have never felt more grateful or honored to be serving the UNA community. While in this role, it was a goal to make the alumni association more accessible and personable to UNA students by putting faces with the name of our organization. We have made meaningful connections with students by serving as panelists during student question-and-answer forums, speaking at and attending commencements, involving students in alumni fundraising and social events,

producing social media videos featuring alumni executive board members explaining why they chose UNA, attending virtual award nights, and creating the National Student Alumni Association. If you know a UNA student or recent graduate, let them know how proud you are of them for their collective efforts, flexibility, and steadfast support of each other.

I would be remiss if I did not encourage you to become familiar with Project 208. UNA is 208 miles from our state's capital. We are the oldest four-year public institution in Alabama, yet we receive the lowest state appropriation. This needs to change! To help, contact your local government representatives. Let them know how UNA has changed your life for the better and the efforts we are making through Project 208.

It has been a pleasure to serve the University in this capacity. During Homecoming 2020, I will be passing the torch to Dr. Mary Leigh Gillespie. She is a true gem and is always willing to pitch in to see our University succeed. I have no doubt in my mind that she will lead us to great things.

It has been a privilege. Let's continue to build a stronger, louder, lion pride.

Roar Lions!

**Tosha-Paige Whitten '13**  
2019-2020 National Alumni  
Association President



## UNA ALUMNI ASSOCIATION EXECUTIVE BOARD

Tosha-Paige Whitten, '13, President  
Mary Leigh Gillespie, '96, President-Elect  
Susan Adams, '80, First Vice President  
Savannah Liles, '11, Second Vice President  
Christa Raney, '97, Secretary  
Justin McGill, '12, Treasurer  
Gale Satchel, '06, Club Advisor  
Lisa Clayton, '00, Faculty Advisor  
Christy Waters, '99, Staff Advisor  
Derrick Chatman, '08, Past President  
Bishop Alexander, '09 & '12, Alumni Director

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Gloria Aday '70	Will Hodges '10
Jeremy Baham '96	Cody Holder '10
Gaye Choat '81	Mike Holt '95
Ryan Clayton '01	Latasha Howell '01
Stephanie Coleman '82	Eric Kirkman '97, '00
Mike Curtis '77	Anna Milwee '14
Clayton Grider '08	Evan Oglesby '10
John Haeger '99	Tina Smith '92
Allison Hall '06	Samuel Thigpen '11
Melanie Harris '08, '10, '17	Denise Watts '77
	Chris Witten '10
	Chelsea Yarber '16

## UNA ALUMNI CLUB LEADERS

ALABAMA	GEORGIA
Birmingham	Atlanta
Chris Burrell '02	Carnette Johnson '83

Decatur/Morgan Co.	MISSISSIPPI
Zac Richardson '02	Central Mississippi
Huntsville	Jeanne Wells Cook '74
Hannah Hopkins '17	

Shoals Area	TENNESSEE
Joshua Lambert '05	Memphis
	Coleman Barron '14

Tuscaloosa	Nashville
Jim Page '01	Jamie Ellis '08

ALUMNI AFFINITY GROUP LEADERS	
Band • Lloyd Jones '92	
Black Alumni • Nikki Durr '00	
Geography • Dan Sasser '14	
ROTC • Jose R. Atencio '82	
Social Work • Ashley Counts '13	
Young Alumni • Emily McCann '13	



**O**n Feb. 24, members of the campus and Shoals community gathered at the University of North Alabama to unveil an historical marker recognizing the significant impact that African Americans have had on the development of the institution since its founding as LaGrange College in 1830.

The marker, which is situated outside of Bibb Graves Hall, acknowledges the role of enslaved persons who constructed and worked at the institution, the integration of Florence State College in 1963 with the enrollment of Wendell W. Gunn, and the barriers broken by other African American students in all areas of campus life.

Read more about integration at UNA here by scanning the code with your phone:



## 1950s

**John "Sonny" Kitchens ('59)** was honored by having Snead State Community College's basketball court named after him; he is a former head basketball coach at Snead State.

## 1960s

**Dick Ordway ('65)** was featured in an article on theredstonerocket.com for his service in the Vietnam War. He retired in 2008 and resides in Madison, Alabama.

## 1970s

**Rebecca "Becky" E. (Lee) Chilcoat ('74)** retired from Vulcan Material Company in June of 2018.

**Nancy Sanford ('78)** was appointed to serve as a member on the University of North Alabama's Board of Trustees effective October 1, 2020.

**Robert Hugh Steele ('78)** started a new position as a Senior Consultant of ITB Partners: Management Consultants.

**Roy Charles LeBaron ('79)** retired in 2019, and is living in Moulton, Alabama.

## 1980s

**David L. Black ('80)** accepted the Colbert County Commission Chairman position.

**Steve Mask ('80)** was selected to be inducted into the Alabama High School Sports Hall of Fame in the Class of 2020.

**Cynthia Anglen ('84)** was awarded the Albert Nelson Marquis Lifetime Achievement Award.

**Timothy "Timmy" Joel James**

('85) was featured in the August edition of Business Alabama magazine. He is the Associate Dean of Instructional Programs at Northwest-Shoals Community College, and he is active with the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools.

**Thomas Keith Wilemon ('85)** was inducted into the Alabama High School Hall of Fame. He retired from his position at Falkville High School as assistant principal and athletic director in 2017.

**Angela Michelle (Jackson) Pettus ('87)** received the Athens High School 2019 Teacher of the Year award.

**Lorie Leigh (Killen) White ('87)** received a Presidential Award for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching.

## 1990s

**David Reed Grissom ('94)** was featured in the August edition of Business Alabama magazine. The mayor of Russellville, he is also the president of Alabama Gun & Pawn in Russellville as well as other pawn businesses.

**Dr. Geana Maria Mitchell ('94)** was awarded the 2019 National Business Education Association Postsecondary Teacher of the Year Award.

**Tina Denise Seals ('94)** was inducted into the Mississippi State University Athletic Hall of Fame. Tina and her husband, Tony, who played baseball in 1982-1983, reside in Columbus, Mississippi.

**Michelle Rupe Eubanks ('96)** was hired as the Director of Communications and Marketing at the University of North Alabama

effective April 1, 2020.

**Jonathan "Matt" Masterson Cooper ('97)** was featured in the August edition of Business Alabama magazine. He is the Executive Vice President of CB&S Bank in Russellville and President/CEO of CB&S Financial Services Inc. He serves on the UNA Executive Business Council.

**Randall Key ('98)** was featured in an article in the Hartselle Enquirer regarding his experiences as a music educator and performer.

**Çağrı Bağcioğlu ('99)**, Board of Trustees President for İstanbul BİLGİ University, was featured in an article in The Business Year regarding higher education in Turkey.

## 2000s

**Haley James ('00)** was named Principal at Riverton Elementary School.

**Richard Curtis ('00)** was the featured artist in an exhibition of paintings titled "Postcards from Nowhere" at Plough Gallery in Thomasville, Georgia.

**Jim Page ('01)** was appointed to serve as a member on the University of North Alabama's Board of Trustees effective October 1, 2020.

**Mary "Beth" Elizabeth (Whitt) Brumley ('01)** received the Association for Career & Technical Education's national New Teacher of the Year Award.

**Dr. Chad Holden ('02)** was appointed as the new Superintendent of Muscle Shoals City Schools.

**Heather Jones ('02)** was named

# Class Notes

Family and Consumer Sciences Teacher of the Year by the American Association of Family and Consumer Sciences.

**Christi Britten ('03)** became the Director of the Tennessee Valley Art Association.

**Brent Blankley ('05)** was appointed as the City of Tuscaloosa's new police chief.

**Jason Mikkal Fort ('05)** received the Law Enforcement of the Year Award for his service to the Florence Police department.

**Jason Boyd ('06)** was appointed CEO of Tristar Horizon Hospital.

**Martin Stephan Heimbeck ('06)** received the Presidential Early Career Award for Scientists and Engineers.

**Craig Demetrius Johnson ('06)** accepted a position as Quality Specialist at Visioneering Technologies, Inc.

**Colene Burns-Trent ('07)** was awarded tenure at Union University. Colene held the title of Miss University of North Alabama in 2007.

**Rhiannon Ellen (Harrison) Daugs ('07)** became the State Director of Women's Officiating for the State of Tennessee.

**Jeanne Lynett (Thomas) Soni ('08)** became an Assistant Vice President of The First Metro Bank.

**Danielle Folette Gibson ('09)** was featured in Business Alabama magazine. She is the President and CEO of Decatur Morgan County Tourism. She serves on the board at the Alabama Mountain Lakes Tourist Association, CEOTA, and the RiverClay Fine Arts Festival. She is an active member of Hartselle and Decatur Rotary clubs.

**Megan Landrum ('09)** received the Academic Faculty Award for NWSCC at the 2019 ACCA Chancellor's Awards.

## 2010s

**Haley Christian (Mitchell) Newton ('10)** was appointed to serve on the Lauderdale County Alabama Tourism Board of Directors.

**J. B. Byars III ('12)** was named Alabama Sportscaster of the Year.

**Breken Tatum Terry ('12)** was recognized by the Alabama Broadcasters Association (ABA) and received the Don Markell Sentinel Award for excellence in investigative reporting. Breken also recently won an Emmy award as a

broadcaster for WAAY 31 news.

**Tyler Lesante Williams ('12)** was promoted to a Lieutenant within the Collierville Police Department.

**Daniel Garrett ('13)** was announced as the new head football coach at Collinsville High School.

**Kaitlin Brooke (Chappell) Rogers ('14)** launched a new book in August, 2019.

**William "Ben" Benjamin Adomyetz ('16)** was featured in the September 2019 issue of Business Alabama as a member of the 2019 class of Alabama Associated General Contractors 40 Under 40.

**Ginger Ann (Jaynes) Willingham ('17)** became the 15th Shoals Woman of the Year.

**Kayla Nicole Cleveland ('18)** was selected for a position with the American Bar Association (ABA). Kayla is the Criminal Justice Committee Section of Civil Rights and Social Justice Vice Chair.

**Daniel Fulmer ('18)** released his band's debut EP titled "Hurt Me." His band is called 50 Fifty.

**Madison McNeely ('19)** accepted a position at Dell Technologies in Texas.

## SAVE THE DATE

### 2020 Golden Lions Reunion – Class of 1970

Every year, the Office of Alumni Relations and UNA Alumni Association will honor a new class of Golden Lions for their 50th class reunion.

We cordially invite the UNA Class of 1970 to be our guest at the Golden Lions Alumni Reunion Weekend on September 11-12 at the University of North Alabama.

North Alabama Football will host Jacksonville State University (JSU) at Braly Stadium on September 12

at 6 p.m. More details with registration and reunion schedule will be released later this summer.

#### Reunion Planning Committee

Gloria Aday '70	Linda Vaughan '70
Carol Lyles Reeves '70	Joe "Bubba" Gibson '78
Jane Cox Long '70	Susan Adams '81
Bishop Alexander '09	

If you have, any questions or concerns about the Golden Lions Reunions, contact the Office of Alumni Relations at 256-765-4201 or by email at [alumni1@una.edu](mailto:alumni1@una.edu). Events are subject to change.

# In Memory

## Graduates 1940s

- DOROTHY "DOTTIE" (BURGESS) SENTZ ('43)  
May 30, 1922 – August 6, 2019
- LILA SHEATS PAGE ('45)  
February 3, 1924 – March 7, 2020
- HOMER LEE KIMBROUGH ('49)  
November 25, 1920 – October 1, 2018
- PEGGY WALSH ALDRIDGE ('49)  
July 29, 1949 – March 28, 2020

## Graduates '50s

- JERRY CURTIS NEWBERN ('50)  
February 16, 1939 – April 12, 2020
- MILTON STERLING KILLEEN, JR., LTC (USA)  
RET. ('50)  
July 1, 1927 – August 2, 2019
- OVID C. ROBERTS, JR. ('50)  
April 16, 1927 – February 14, 2019
- BOB L. WORTMANN ('52)  
October 20, 1927 – January 9, 2020
- DAVID C. BROWN ('53)  
March 15, 1930 – February 13, 2020
- JAMES O. CHEATHAM ('53)  
August 18, 1931 – April 13, 2020
- BEATRICE MARIE (KIMBROUGH)  
TIDMORE ('54)  
May 25, 1930 – August 17, 2017
- WILTON HARRELL CHISM ('56)  
October 27, 1933 – October 2019
- PAUL GRAY DYAR ('56)  
May 14, 1932 – January 3, 2019
- LT. COL. JUNIOR "WIMPY" WINFORD  
GILLESPIE ('56)  
November 8, 1930 – October 3, 2019
- BETTY LOIS (WHITTEN) HARDING ('56)  
November 6, 1919 – October 10, 2019

ELLA SUE LEMAY ('56)  
April 19, 1928 – August 2, 2019

CHARLES M. TURNER ('56)  
February 4, 1933 – December 5, 2019

WILLIAM ODELL CRABB ('57)  
May 30, 1930 – February 7, 2020

EDSEL PRICE HOLDEN ('57)  
February 23, 1932 – December 29, 2019

VERLIN PAUL AMBERSION ('59)  
July 28, 1935 – July 27, 2018

PATRICIA YEAGER RUTHERFORD ('59)  
June 12, 1935 – February 15, 2020

WILLIAM W. "BILL" ROBBINS ('59)  
October 8, 1935 – March 14, 2020

MARTHA ELIZABETH ETHEREDGE HUNT ('59)  
March 9, 1937 – October 3, 2019

## Graduates '60s

- AUDREY JEAN (BEHEL) POSEY ('60)  
April 9, 1939 – March 19, 2018
- GARY LEE STEPHENS ('60)  
July 30, 1938 – August 6, 2019
- DR. JERRY LEE BEAVERS ('61)  
September 14, 1938 – August 31, 2019
- REBECCA KING DICKINSON ('61)  
d. January 14, 2020
- KAYE (GRIFFIN) BERRY ('63)  
February 1, 1943 – August 31, 2019
- JUDITH MELICKS ('64)  
September 1, 1942 – April 8, 2020
- ALFRED "JERRY" ALABY OLDHAM, JR. ('65)  
October 13, 1942 – August 12, 2019
- BOBBY "BOB" RAY SNEED ('65)  
February 23, 1943 – August 22, 2019
- DOUGLAS L. MCKAY ('66)  
September 4, 1942 – August 2, 2019
- MARGARET SHARP CLEMONS ('67)  
November 29, 1945 – February 28, 2020
- JAMES DAVID MORGAN ('67)  
January 24, 1931 – March 27, 2017
- DANIEL "DAN" LEE SEARCY ('67)  
December 17, 1945 – November 6, 2019
- JAMES SCOTT "SCOTTY" LANKFORD ('68)  
June 12, 1941 – January 1, 2019
- HOWARD "HOWIE" LOYD LYONS, JR. ('68)  
September 18, 1944 – November 11, 2019
- JOHN THOMAS WALLACE ('68)  
June 6, 1944 – January 13, 2020
- MARIE BOHNSTEDT ('69)  
November 12, 1937 – January 12, 2020

## Graduates '70s

- FRANCIS LAWRENCE ANDREWS ('70)  
October 15, 1946 – August 3, 2019
- JEAN STRICKLIN SCREWS ('70)  
August 16, 1928 – March 2, 2020
- JOYCE ANN LAWLER WEST ('70)  
January 3, 1938 – January 4, 2020
- CORINNE "CONNIE" HANCOCK  
BRADFORD ('71)  
July 21, 1925 – December 28, 2019
- JANELLE T. PHILLIPS ('71)  
June 14, 1941 – February 25, 2020
- JAMES DOUGLAS "JIMMY" HARTLEY ('71)  
June 25, 1947 – April 11, 2020
- NELDA JUNE (WYNN) MOSS ('71)  
July 6, 1943 – November 5, 2019

PHYLLIS JOHNSON WOODALL  
CASTILE ('71)  
September 28, 1949 – April 15, 2020

ZULA MAE (GREENHILL) GUIN  
January 21, 1936 – January 27, 2017

BETTY JANE (ELLIOTT) CROSBY ('72)  
July 26, 1932 – August 21, 2019

MILDRED EUDY TERRELL ('72)  
November 17, 1929 – April 9, 2020

WILLIAM CURTIS CLEMONS ('73)  
April 18, 1941 – January 29, 2017

VICKI LYNN (PAYNE) GRIER ('73)  
February 20, 1950 – July 30, 2019

EDGAR HAROLD JONES, JR. ('73)  
March 29, 1949 – November 17, 2019

STEPHEN HUGH MURPHY, SR. ('73)  
August 10, 1949 – September 30, 2019

JAMIEL SALIBA ('73)  
October 13, 1951 – January 9, 2020

PATRICK JOSEPH SEABOL ('73)  
December 31, 1947 – April 6, 2019

KENNETH COY AUSTIN ('74)  
September 4, 1942 – July 24, 2019

JESABETH (ARNOLD) DUNCAN ('74)  
December 13, 1938 – November 27, 2018

FLINT C. GILLESPIE ('74)  
October 24, 1925 – October 26, 2018

ALAN V. LEDGEWOOD ('76)  
August 24, 1953 – January 20, 2020

JAMES "JIM" WILBUR STEELE ('76)  
September 19, 1941 – July 26, 2019

LARRY DAVID CROMEANS ('79)  
October 27, 1951 – July 23, 2018

## Graduates '80s

CHARLES "DOUG" DOUGLAS HARVEY ('81)  
December 9, 1944 – March 22, 2019

DEXTER "DEX" L. JOHNSON ('86)  
January 29, 1951 – February 21, 2019

PHILIP WADE LANDERS ('87)  
March 23, 1965 – September 16, 2019

JOYCE LEONE DRAPEAU ('88)  
March 3, 1938 – July 25, 2018

## Graduates '90s

TRACEY RENEE (AMASON) BLAYLOCK ('90)  
July 21, 1967 – November 26, 2019

MICHAEL JAMES RIANT ('90)  
April 12, 1967 – June 1, 2019

PAULA LYNN WILLIAMS ('91)  
June 12, 1969 – October 29, 2019

JEFFREY CHARLES EUBANKS ('96)  
January 18, 1971 – February 6, 2020

JAY "GINO" STEWART ('98)

September 19, 1971 – November 19, 2019

## Graduates 2000s

RACHEL ALYCE JOINER ('01)

September 29, 1979 – August 22, 2019

MIKE ANTONIO METCALF ('03)

February 24, 1979 – August 9, 2019

SHARYN JEAN (ADAMS) SANDERSON ('05)

January 31, 1946 – August 12, 2019

ADRIAN CHRISTOPHER FRAZIER ('07)

March 15, 1983 – September 20, 2019

LAURA STONECIPHER ('08)

December 21, 1981 – January 2, 2019

## Students

ROGER PECK

June 28, 1940 – August 18, 2019

BARRY SCOTT

## Students 1950s

MARY JANE (LONG) BENDALL

March 8, 1933 – September 13, 2019

## Students 2020s

JAMES A. CLARK

January 20, 1999 – April 10, 2020

## Friends of the University

BETTY LOU (DISNEY) KITS

November 4, 1930 – July 26, 2019

DALTON "FROG" MCCRELESS

March 2, 1944 – May 14, 2018

## Faculty and Staff

DR. THOMAS H. FOSTER

March 7, 1940 – March 2, 2020

## Years Unidentified

LOUIS PAUL BROUSSARD II

June 30, 1959 – March 1, 2020

HILDA B. ANDERSON

March 19, 1935 – March 1, 2020

EARLYNE OLIVIA SMITH ALLISON

January 16, 1921 – January 28, 2020

RICHARD EMMETT MOSS

June 17, 1928 – January 20, 2020

DONNA IRWIN BULL

November 7, 1940 – March 24, 2020

MARGARET THORNE KENNEDY

April 24, 1939 – January 13, 2020



## *Celebrating another chapter in inclusivity...*

In 2022, the University of North Alabama will celebrate the “Year of UNA Women” by marking the 150th Anniversary of the Admittance of Women to the institution. In 1872, the State Normal School at Florence became the first state-supported teachers college south of the Ohio River and that year allowed women to enter as students. With the arrival of 31 women in the class of 1874, UNA became one of the first co-educational institutions in the nation. Three women earned degrees in 1879 with the first graduating class of the new State Normal School. Women joined the UNA faculty in 1879. But this was just the beginning of a long and exciting history and just a few of the “firsts” for women as UNA students, faculty, staff, and administrators.

UNA is planning a series of events, concerts, lectures, and special publications to celebrate these historical events and the many other achievements and milestones that have been part of our institution’s great history. We look forward to telling the story of those who have blazed a trail for everyone, recording the wonderful experiences of our alumni, and showcasing the future generations of UNA Women who will continue to make an enormous impact on UNA, our nation, and the world.

Look for more information in future editions!





Division of Advancement  
University of North Alabama  
UNA Box 5113  
Florence, Alabama 35632-0001

NON-PROFIT  
ORGANIZATION  
PRESORTED  
U.S. POSTAGE  
**PAID**  
UNIVERSITY OF  
NORTH ALABAMA

CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

**Caring for  
the Pride**  
supports students,  
faculty, and staff who  
have been adversely  
affected by a short-term,  
unexpected life event.  
Make your tax-deductible  
donation today by visiting  
**[una.edu/give](http://una.edu/give)**

Make checks payable to

**UNA Foundation –  
Caring for the Pride**  
UNA Foundation  
UNA Box 5075  
Florence, AL 35632